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Title: BASKET AND METHOD OF MAKING BASKET

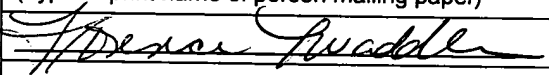
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CERTIFICATION UNDER 37 CFR 1.10

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BASKET AND METHOD OF MAKING BASKET

Field of the Invention

This invention relates to improved methods and apparatus concerning basket making.

Background of the Invention

There are various known techniques for making baskets.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention in one or more embodiments provides an apparatus. The apparatus comprises a basket formed from a portion of a tree so that at least part of the basket retains a natural outer form of the portion of the tree. The portion of the tree may be a portion of a trunk of the tree or a portion of a branch of a tree. The natural outer form may be the natural outer form of a bark section of the portion of the tree, or the natural outer form of an inner wood section lying directly beneath a bark section of the portion of the tree. The natural outer form of the inner wood section can be seen by simply peeling off the bark section. The basket may include an integral handle. The basket may have a bottom, which is formed by cutting.

The present invention in one or more embodiments also includes a method comprising removing a portion of a tree, wherein the portion includes a bark section and an inner wood section, wherein the inner wood section is surrounded by the bark section. The bark section has a natural outer form. The inner wood section also has a natural outer form, which lies directly beneath the bark section, and can be seen by simply peeling off the bark section. The method may further include forming a basket from the portion of the tree. The basket may or may not

have the bark removed. The basket typically retains the natural outer form of the inner wood section or the natural outer form of the bark section.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Fig. 1 shows a diagram of a tree including portions of a tree for use in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2A shows a front perspective view of a portion of a tree trunk;

Fig. 2B shows a rear perspective view of the portion of the tree trunk of Fig. 2A;

Fig. 3A shows a front perspective view of the portion of the tree trunk of Fig. 2A with the bark removed and with dashed lines showing locations to cut to make a basket;

Fig. 3B shows a rear perspective view of the portion of the tree trunk of Fig. 2A with the bark removed and with dashed lines showing locations to cut to make the basket;

Fig. 4A shows an upside down front perspective view of the basket after it has been made from the portion of the tree trunk;

Fig. 4B shows an upside down rear perspective view of the basket after it has been made from the portion of the tree trunk;

Fig. 5A shows a right side up front perspective view of the basket after it has been made from the portion of the tree trunk; and

Fig. 5B shows a right side up rear perspective view of the basket after it has been made from the portion of the tree trunk.

Detailed Description of the Drawings

Fig. 1 shows a diagram of a tree 1 including a portion 10 of a tree trunk 5 for use in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention and including a portion 50 of a branch 7

for use with another embodiment of the present invention. The tree 1 includes leaves and/or branches 2, trunk 5, roots 6, and branch 7. The trunk 5 includes portions 3 and 10. The portion 10 has bark 12. The bark 12 of portion 10 is shown by solid lines, while an inner wood portion of the portion 10 is shown by dashed lines. The bark 12 has a natural outer form. The inner wood portion has a natural outer form or shape, directly beneath the bark 12, shown by the dashed lines, which includes bump or knot 16. The natural outer form of the inner wood portion, although shown for simplification by using straight dashed lines (except for bump or knot 16), will typically have curves, nonuniformities, bumps, ridges, knots, imperfections, etc.

Fig. 2A shows a front perspective view of the portion 10 of the tree trunk 5 for use in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The portion 10 is shown in a simplified diagram by using straight lines, however, any portion of a tree trunk, such as tree trunk 5 or any other tree trunk, can be used including a portion which has curved sides, nonuniformities, imperfections, or knots. Such uniformities serve to make each basket made in accordance with one or more embodiments of the present invention unique. Fig. 2B shows a rear perspective view of the portion 10 of the tree trunk 5 of Fig. 2A.

The portion 10 includes a bark 12 which is shown in solid lines in Figs. 2A and 2B. The bark 12 includes portions 12a and 12b identified in Fig. 2A and portions 12c and 12d identified in Fig. 2B. The portion 10 of the trunk 5 of the tree 1 also includes an inner wood section or portion 14, which is shown by dashed lines. The inner wood section 14 may be substantially or entirely solid and may be surrounded by the bark 12. The inner wood section 14 has a top surface 14e and a bottom surface 14f, which are initially formed when the portion 10 of the tree trunk 5 is initially cut at location 15e shown in Fig. 1 from the portion 3 of the tree trunk 5. The top surface 14e may be formed by a first cut into the tree 5, which separates the portion 3 of the tree 1 above the portion 10, from the portion 10, and from tree roots 6 below the portion 10. The bottom

surface 14f may be formed by a second cut, which may be at location 15f. The second cut, at location 15f separates the portion 10 from the roots 6 of the tree 1. The portion 10 of the tree trunk 5 may include knot, imperfection or bump 16. The portion 10 of the tree trunk 5 may include a plurality of such knots, imperfections, curves or bumps, however, one knot, imperfection or bump 16 is shown for simplification. The knot 16 may lie under the bark 12 and may push part of the bark 12 outward. The inner wood section 14 has a natural outer form, which includes sides 14a, 14b (including knot 16), 14c, and 14d. This natural outer form lies directly beneath the bark 12.

Fig. 3A shows a front perspective view of the portion 10 of the tree trunk 5 with the bark 12 removed and with dashed lines showing locations to cut or carve to make a basket. The piece or block of wood 14 is cut along dashed lines 18b, 19a, and 18a shown in Fig. 2A and along dashed lines 18d, 19c, and 18c shown in Fig. 2B. The piece or block of wood 14 is typically not cut all the way through but rather a handle 20, shown in dashed lines in Figs. 2A and 2B, is typically carved out. The result is that a handle 20 is integrally formed with a portion or basket 22. The handle 20 is typically integrally connected to the portion or basket 22 at junctions 20a and 20c shown in Figs. 3A and 3B, respectively. In some embodiments a basket or portion 22 may be formed without a handle 20. The basket portions 22a, 22b, 22c, and 22d, have a portion of the natural outer form of the sides 14a, 14b, 14c, and 14d, respectively. Part of the sides 14a, 14b, 14c, and 14d was removed to form the basket 100 in Figs. 5A and 5B. In one embodiment, the basket portions 22a, 22b, 22c, and 22d may include part of the bark 12.

Fig. 4A shows an upside down front perspective view of a basket 100 after it has been made from the portion 10 of the tree trunk 5. The basket 100 may include the portion or basket 22 and the handle 20. The term basket may be used to describe the portion 22 and the handle 20, together as one integrated unit, or it may be used to describe just the portion 22. Fig. 4B

shows an upside down rear perspective view of the basket 100 after it has been made from the portion 10 of the tree trunk 5. The portion 22 includes sides 22a and 22b shown in Fig. 3A and sides 22c and 22d shown in Fig. 3B. The portion 22 includes side or surface 14e, which is the same as the top surface of block of wood 14. The side 22b includes the knot 16. The sides 22a, 22b, 22c, and 22d are shown as straight and uniform, with the exception of knot 16, merely to simplify description. The sides 22a, 22b, 22c, and 22d will typically follow the outside form of the portion 10 of the tree trunk 5 after the bark 12 has been removed. The sides 22a, 22b, 22c, and 22d may thus have a variety of shapes, curves, knots imperfections, bumps etc, depending on the shape of the natural outside form of the inner wood section 14 of the portion 10 of the tree trunk 5. In one embodiment, the sides 22a, 22b, 22c, and 22d may include part of the bark 12 and may take on the natural outside form of part of the bark 12.

Fig. 5A shows a right side up front perspective view of the basket 100 after it has been made from the portion 10 of the tree trunk 5. Fig. 5B shows a right side up rear perspective view of the basket 100 after it has been made from the portion 10 of the tree trunk 5. The portion 22 includes a hollowed out area 22e, which is open at the top to allow insertion of objects, and which is surrounded by sides 22a, 22b, 22c, and 22d, and closed at the bottom by surface 14e.

The tree 1 may be a Chinese Cedar Tree or any other tree. A stain may be applied to the basket 100 to color the basket 100 from a lighter more natural color to a dark brown. A diameter or width D2, shown in Fig. 5A, of the portion or basket 22 may range from ten inches to thirty inches depending on the size of the trunk of the tree. The height, or D2 shown in Fig. 5B of the basket 100 from the surface 14e to the top of handle 20 may be D2, which may be five to twenty-five inches.

The bark or bark section 12 may be left on and the natural outer form of the bark 12 may form at least part of the outer surface of a basket. In such an embodiment, bark 12 would cover

part or all of sides 22a, 22b, 22c, and 22d of the basket 100 or a basket similar to basket 100. Also, a portion can be taken from any part of the trunk of a tree not just the bottom of the trunk of the tree. In another embodiment a basket can be made from a branch of a tree. Typically, regardless the portion of the tree that the basket comes from, or whether bark is left on, each basket will be unique because it will include a unique natural outer form of either the bark of the tree or an inner wood section of the tree, lying directly beneath the bark of the tree.

In one embodiment the portion 50 of the branch 7 of the tree 1 shown in Fig. 1, can be cut out of the tree 1. The portion 50 can be used to form a basket in the same manner that the basket 100 was formed from the portion 10 of the trunk 5. Cuts can be made at locations 50a and 50b, shown in dashed lines to cut out the portion 50. Typically a surface formed by cutting at location 50a will be smaller than the surface formed by cutting at location 50b. Typically, as for the portion 10, the location of the smaller cut will be the location of the bottom the basket to be formed. In this manner the basket will typically flare outwards from the bottom of the basket towards the junction of the handle of the basket. For example, Figs. 5A and 5B show that sides 22a, 22b, 22c, and 22d of the basket or portion 22 flare out from the bottom 14e to the handle junctions 20a and 20c. In a similar manner sides of a basket formed by portion 50 of branch 7 would typically flare out from the bottom the basket to the junctions of the handle of the basket.

Although the invention has been described by reference to particular illustrative embodiments thereof, many changes and modifications of the invention may become apparent to those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. It is therefore intended to include within this patent all such changes and modifications as may reasonably and properly be included within the scope of the present invention's contribution to the art.